

The Manager

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

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Case Scenario

Bourguiba Clinic Develops a Marketing Plan

Marketing Your Organization's Services

Editors' Note

Health organizations are increasingly functioning in a marketplace where other health organizations offer similar services to overlapping populations. As a result of such competition for users, more and more organizations are turning to marketing to help them both to identify and better serve their target populations' needs and to increase and sustain demand for their services. Through a comprehensive approach to marketing, they can achieve optimal use of their resources, increase their income, and help to ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

This issue of *The Manager* explains the role of marketing in achieving an organization's goals and in increasing demand for services. It discusses key marketing principles and strategic questions that managers should consider when deciding whether to embark on a marketing program. It suggests steps for laying the groundwork for a comprehensive marketing program with a marketing team and deciding where to focus marketing efforts. The issue also offers strategies an organization can use to strengthen its mix of marketing elements: product, populations, price, place, production, and promotion. Implementing the right mix of these elements through a marketing plan can help an organization build a mutually satisfying relationship with its clients, the groups that purchase its services, and its supporting community.

—The Editors

The Manager

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Understanding the Role of Marketing in Achieving an Organization's Goals

Health organizations face a wide array of challenges in an ever-changing marketplace. For example, a non-governmental health organization may find itself serving fewer clients and its market share slipping from eight per cent to four per cent of its target population. Or a district manager for the Ministry of Health may find that a growing number of unqualified doctors and nurses who are establishing private clinics have reduced the overall quality of reproductive health care in the district. A small, low-cost family planning facility might be underused because the public confuses it with a low-quality clinic. Another organization may face a loss of external funding, but might determine that certain useful laboratory tests it offers can help it recover costs. To face such challenges, health organizations in the public and private-nonprofit sectors increasingly define their services and inform the public through effective marketing.

"Marketing means running a first-rate program and letting people know about it." (Phillips and Raspberry, 1997) Marketing can take many forms. For example, an organization's employees are marketing when they provide quality services to their clients. They are also marketing when they offer information about and refer clients to their various services. Satisfied clients, in turn, are marketing the organization when they recommend its services to their friends.

The focus of marketing is fostering exchanges. An organization exchanges something of value (services) for something that it needs (money or in-kind contributions) to continue its services. *For example, a health organization may provide reproductive and primary health care services in exchange for payment from its clients. It may choose to provide discounted health services in exchange for voluntary community efforts in painting and maintaining its clinics.* Once the managers and staff of a program or clinic understand that one of their goals is to exchange something of value for something they need, then they make extra efforts to create services of value for their clients and look to their clients and the community to meet some of their needs for resources and customers. Marketing helps organizations to initiate, cultivate, and nurture exchange relationships with their clients and community.

Effective marketing helps an organization to mobilize demand for its services and use its resources efficiently at full capacity, so that it can maximize its income and better ensure its long-term sustainability. In the past, some organizations have tried to increase demand for their services through extensive publicity and advertising directed at potential clients. This issue of *The Manager* presents a more comprehensive approach to marketing: identifying its target populations and understanding their needs well, then adjusting internal organizational attitudes, activities, and systems to make services more client-oriented, and promoting these improved services through low-cost techniques.

This comprehensive approach to marketing helps an organization achieve the long-term goals for its target populations developed through strategic planning. Marketing supports strategic plans by identifying ways to increase or improve exchanges of services for resources, such as attracting more clients or new funding sources to support the services. Managers can use marketing to help them to:

- define a unique niche, or role and image, for their organization in the marketplace;
- unite all operational, administrative, and managerial efforts and focus them on the target populations identified in their organizational mission;
- provide their target populations with a clearly identified set of services and products that reflect the organization's niche;
- provide these services in ways that satisfy their potential clients' needs, preferences, and aspirations;
- always concentrate their limited resources on their target populations.

This issue of *The Manager* discusses key principles that managers should understand and share with their staff if they are to implement marketing efforts through-

out their organization. It explains how managers can lay the groundwork for a comprehensive marketing approach in their organization and decide where to focus marketing efforts through a marketing audit and/or market research. It discusses strategies managers and their staff can use to strengthen the quality and accessibility of their services, determine the appropriateness of their prices, and increase the effectiveness of their production and promotion. It also explains how they can consolidate marketing goals and audit findings to develop an overall marketing plan.

The guest editors for this issue are Michael Hall and Rena Eichler. Michael Hall is the Guatemala Country Team Manager for Management Sciences for Health (MSH). He has over ten years of experience working on organizational development, strategic planning, and sustainability issues in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, especially with International Planned Parenthood Federation affiliates. Rena Eichler is a Senior Program Associate and Health Economist with the Health Reform and Financing Program of MSH. Combining an economics perspective with prior marketing experience in the private sector, she provides assistance primarily to Latin American organizations and governments in designing and implementing strategies to attain their goals.

Defining Marketing Terms

Marketing. The practice of learning about target populations, adjusting services to better satisfy their needs and preferences, and persuading these populations to continue their use or support of a specific organization. Marketing practices can influence the level, timing, and composition of demand for services.

Marketing mix. The combination of efforts an organization makes to increase knowledge of and demand for its services. These efforts fall under six categories: product, populations, price, place, production, and promotion.

Market niche. An organization's unique role and image within the greater marketplace. An organization's niche should be large enough to provide it with enough funds and other resources, fit the skills and resources it has or can easily obtain, offer potential to grow, and be of little interest to major competitors.

Market segmentation. The process of breaking down a market or a target population that is too large to serve effectively into smaller populations that share common interests. Organizations may segment populations by, for example, clients' disposable income, or the size of employers whose employees they serve. They may then develop specialized services for these subpopulations.

Target populations. Groups to whom organizations market their services, including current and potential users of services, purchasers of services who may be different from users, such as employers and donors, and the supporting community.

Recognizing Marketing Principles

Managers who want to initiate marketing efforts to help achieve their mission and long-term goals need to recognize some important principles of marketing:

- Understand the marketplace and define the organization's niche;
- Build client needs into operations;
- Make and fulfill commitments to the public;
- Rely on personal recommendations as a key promotional technique;
- Make marketing the responsibility of everyone in the organization.

Understand the marketplace and define the organization's niche. The marketplace, where organizations offer similar services and different populations seek out those services, is expanding. More groups are becoming aware of both the range of services that can help them and the cost of these services. They are seeking out organizations that best meet their needs, preferences, and budget. Organizations must clearly understand these different groups: their demographic characteristics, health knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behavior, their sources of information, and their expectations. They need to determine which groups they can best serve, and find ways to attract them by clearly differentiating themselves from other organizations—in other words, defining a niche for themselves in the marketplace. *For example, one organization's niche may be that it provides low-cost, essential health care to low-income families, while another's niche may be offering full-service health care to a higher-income population.*

Build client needs into operations. A service organization that understands its target clients' needs can use marketing to adjust its services to fit these needs. It alters the use of its space, staff, equipment, and other resources to efficiently provide the services that clients tend to use. It promotes less popular services to users of its other services. It builds its client orientation into visit procedures, information systems, recruitment procedures, staff job descriptions, performance planning, and many other operations. Marketing can help the organization treat its clients as customers, not as numbers.

Make and fulfill commitments to the public.

Some people shy away from marketing because they confuse it with the high-pressured advertising of consumer products. In a service organization, marketing means trying to shape the many messages the organization sends in the course of providing daily services. These messages tell people whom the program serves, the quality and accessibility of its services, the rights and treatment of its clients, the quality of its staff, the costs and benefits of its services, and its overall mission in the community. Ideally, all these messages will add up to one overriding public message: "This organization offers good services to these specific groups."

Given the very intimate nature of reproductive health and the complicated medical nature of many of its services, reproductive health clients will not continuously entrust themselves to an organization that does not do what it says it will do. An organization that uses marketing commits itself to deliver the kind of care in all its client interactions that it says it will in its public pronouncements. To build public credibility and client loyalty, it consistently follows through on this commitment.

Rely on personal recommendations as a key promotional technique. Every health organization has experienced the power of personal recommendations, both positive and negative. Good-quality services create positive marketing because clients tell other people about them, while poor-quality services create negative marketing. Surveys have shown that a satisfied client will report a good experience to about six people, while a dissatisfied client will tell at least eleven people. Positive word-of-mouth reports are the most cost-effective way of retaining clients, attracting new clients, and defining organizational image in the community.

To make effective service recommendations, clients should know about the services and the individual needs of potential clients and should confidently accept responsibility for the outcome of their recommendations. Potential clients will listen to people whose judgment and integrity they trust. To encourage an environment in which clients recommend services, organizations should strive for quality, efficiency, user-friendliness, good client communications, and strong operational performance within their market niche.

Make marketing the responsibility of everyone in the organization. Marketing is not the exclusive responsibility of a specialized department devoted to advertising, education, or promotion. Employees who deal directly with the public are especially important in shaping the organizational image that is presented to

clients and potential clients, but they need the support of their co-workers. While a small group needs to provide overall direction for the marketing effort, it takes all employees, pulling together, to achieve a consistency in quality that clients will notice and tell others about.

Considering the Strategic Benefits of Marketing

As a manager of a health organization, you need to determine what kind of benefits marketing can offer your organization. To do this, you will need to review your organization's long-term goals, serious challenges from competitors, and marketplace opportunities that may affect your organization's ability to meet its long-term goals. Marketplace opportunities may include new political support for reproductive health, growing public concern about sexually transmissible diseases, or improvements in your target populations' economic status. After your review, meet with other senior managers and your board of directors, if you have one, and discuss the following questions:

- Does low demand for our services make the organization operate below capacity, so that we have lower income and higher unit costs than we would like?
- Do we need new, more effective strategies to increase demand so that we can improve our long-term sustainability?
- Do we need more productive strategies to augment our financial and nonfinancial resources?
- Are marketplace opportunities emerging that we will want to take advantage of?
- Are we experiencing challenges in the marketplace from competition or unexplained declines in demand?

If you answer "Yes" to one or more of these questions, marketing can help you attract more clients and resources.

Developing a Marketing Approach in Your Organization

In order to develop a comprehensive marketing approach in your organization, you, as the manager, will need to:

- lay the groundwork for a comprehensive marketing approach in your organization;
- decide where to focus your marketing efforts;
- develop marketing strategies that benefit your target populations;
- promote your services with low-cost techniques;
- recognize your role as manager in an organization-wide marketing effort.

Laying the Groundwork for Marketing

First, you will need to lay the groundwork for an effective marketing program. To do this, you should take the following steps:

- develop a marketing team that understands marketing principles;
- clarify your market niche;
- develop a positioning statement;
- establish marketing goals.

Developing a Marketing Team

Whether or not your organization has a marketing department, you will need an organization-wide internal marketing team to help you build a marketing orientation

throughout your organization. The team will oversee the planning, implementation, and evaluation of marketing efforts. It should be composed of representatives from such groups as:

- management;
- the board of directors (if there is a board);
- service personnel and administrative staff;
- community groups, including political leaders and volunteers.

Each of these groups plays a different role in the marketing effort. A manager's role is to establish program goals and make the necessary program decisions to meet the realities of the marketplace. Board members can provide vision to the organization and should be involved, if possible, in helping to set the direction of the marketing team, even if they do not participate in later operational meetings. Employees from operational levels bring the immediate realities of dealing with the marketplace to the team and also are able to communicate the decisions of the team back to their respective departments. Political leaders and volunteers can provide a useful community perspective and solicit

information from other community members that can help the team make decisions.

At the first meeting, the team should discuss marketing principles and marketplace opportunities and difficulties that led you to convene a marketing team. They need to review the strategic plan and discuss how marketing can help the organization reach its planning goals. Once the team understands these important background issues, they can begin to clarify a market niche for the organization.

Clarifying a Market Niche

To clarify the niche your organization occupies, the team should first consider the current and future needs of the community that you serve. You can brainstorm about which organizations in your area meet these needs best. Then compare your organizational strengths with theirs. You should decide which needs your organization is best qualified to meet, which needs you can meet best by collaborating with other organizations, and where you have no role because needs are being adequately met by other organizations. The following table suggests a way to organize information about your market niche.

Understanding Your Marketing Niche: Sample Chart

Community needs we are currently meeting	The best organization for meeting these needs is . . .	Compared to the best organization, our strengths and weaknesses are . . .	Though not the best, we make a unique contribution of . . .	We would be better off collaborating by . . .	We need to leave this niche to another organization because . . .
Child health	Our organization				
Laboratory services	Ministry of Health (MOH) clinic	Strength: More highly trained staff Weakness: Less equipment	Nothing	Making referrals to the MOH clinic when volume is high, and accepting referrals from this clinic for more specialized tests	
Sonograms	Private practitioners' clinic	Strength: Lower fees Weakness: Only one staff member trained to do the procedure	Offering the only moderately priced sonograms in the area		

Developing a Positioning Statement

As a team, you should synthesize your discussions about market niche into a positioning statement, which is a short, dynamic statement about your organization's market niche. This statement will focus on the most

important contribution your organization makes in fulfilling community needs and the manner in which it meets these needs. Once you have agreed on a positioning statement, you should communicate it to all staff and to the outside world.

How to . . .

Develop a Positioning Statement

One or two people from the organization should write a positioning statement that summarizes the organization's market niche.

- Review language from the marketing team's discussions about market niche.
- Write at least five clear, easily understood phrases that you could use to complete each of the following statements:

Community role: We're the organization that . . .

Action: No one but we can _____ as well as we do.

Reputation: We want to be seen as the . . .

- Circle four phrases that strongly communicate your organization's unique role.
- Develop a short statement, using the circled phrases, that conveys this role, your organization's reputation, and a sense of action.

Example: *Planned Parenthood—Front-line advocates and health care providers for reproductive choice.*

- Pretest your positioning statement with representatives from your staff, board, donors, clients, and community opinion leaders. Ask them:
 - In your opinion, does the statement represent our organization accurately?
 - Does it present a helpful position in the community?
 - Do you have suggestions for improving it?
 - Are there other people whose opinion we should ask?
- Revise your statement, based on useful comments.
- Use your statement internally to provide focus and externally to build community recognition for your organization's role.

Adapted from Stern, Marketing Workbook for Nonprofit Organizations, Volume I: Develop the Plan, 1990, pp. 32–40. Used with permission of Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

Establishing Your Marketing Goals

Once the team has clarified a market niche for your organization, it should establish goals for the marketing program. The marketing goals you set should be realistic and feasible within the desired time frame. Marketing goals include action goals and image goals related to attracting target populations.

Action goals. Action goals identify the specific, measurable results that you want and will allow you to measure progress toward achieving them within a given time period. Action goals for marketing usually concentrate on:

- increasing the use of services by a specific group of clients;
- increasing the use of specific services by existing or new clients;
- introducing a new service to a new or existing group of clients;
- gaining access to new sources of funding.

Sample action goals:

- Increase from 42% to 60% the percentage of pregnant women served by our clinic who have at least three prenatal visits in the next three years.
- Increase the percentage of revenue collected for services so that the percentage of costs covered from fees increases from 20% to 35% in the next three years.

Image goals. Image goals identify how you want your organization to be seen. You can measure progress in achieving these goals through focus groups or market surveys. Image goals often concentrate on:

- helping your organization become more widely known;
- improving your organization's public reputation;
- gaining public recognition of a change in your services.

Sample image goals:

- Become known as the organization that provides the best counseling in family planning over the next two years.
- Change the public perception of the organization from a family planning provider to a full-service primary health care provider in the next two years.

Establishing goals gives you the opportunity to determine what you want for your organization. Next, you need to look at where your organization currently is along the way to achieving those goals.

Deciding Where to Focus Your Marketing Efforts

After establishing marketing goals, your team should identify target areas for the marketing efforts. To do this, you should conduct either, or a combination of:

- a marketing audit to understand the current internal marketing status of your organization;
- market research to find out from your target population what their perceptions of your organization and other organizations are.

Performing a marketing audit. A marketing audit assesses the marketing mix, or the combination of efforts that an organization makes to increase knowledge about and demand for its target populations. The key elements of the marketing mix that you should assess are:

- **Product**—The services or outputs you offer.
- **Populations**—The groups with whom you make exchanges of services for resources.
- **Price**—The amount you charge for each service.
- **Place**—The locations where your product is available and ways in which your population can access your product.
- **Production**—Your capacity for meeting demand.
- **Promotion**—The communication techniques and messages you use to motivate people to respond.

The audit helps you to address your action goals by organizing information to help you see if you are providing the right services at the right prices, in easily accessible ways to the right people, and if you have the capacity to produce the quantities of services demanded. To meet your image goals, the audit will help you to identify the key groups of people you are reaching and plan your promotional efforts to reinforce the image you want.

For the audit, you and your team will look at service records, make observations in the facility, and collect information from staff, clients, the community, and others who know your target populations well. You can conduct an in-depth audit where you gather a great deal

of information over six months or perform a quicker audit to identify troublesome areas. If you decide to assess a number of departments, you will want to perform a separate audit for each.

As a result of the marketing audit, you should be able to identify where you need more information, where you need to make adjustments in the current mix, and what features and benefits you should promote. The following box shows a sample format for a marketing audit.

Sample Marketing Audit Format			
<p>Performing a marketing audit helps you coordinate the six elements of your marketing mix. In each section, initial questions ask for a description of the element while later questions help you decide if this element is directed toward increasing demand. As you answer these questions, note information or adjustments you need to make, and features or benefits you should promote.</p>			
Product			
<p>What are the services you offer?</p> <p>What, if anything, makes these services difficult to understand or use?</p> <p>Are these services of high enough quality?</p> <p>Do they meet a specific public need?</p>			<p><i>Additional information needed:</i></p> <p><i>Adjustments needed:</i></p> <p><i>Service features to promote:</i></p>
Populations			
<p>List each of your major services and all your target populations in the boxes below. (Mark with a check the populations with the greatest need for each service. Indicate the service benefits those populations value the most.)</p>			<p><i>Additional information needed:</i></p> <p><i>Adjustments needed:</i></p> <p><i>Benefits to target populations to promote:</i></p>
Service	Populations	Valued Service Benefits	
<p>Do you serve the appropriate populations for your services?</p> <p>Do you understand what benefits you provide your populations from their perspective?</p>			
Price			
<p>What do you want your populations to give you: money, in-kind payment, other resources, cooperation?</p> <p>How much do you charge each of your populations? (Consider fees and time required for services.)</p> <p>Could you ask some of your populations to pay more without reducing demand?</p> <p>Do your populations consider your prices too high, too low, or reasonable?</p>			<p><i>Additional information needed:</i></p> <p><i>Adjustments needed:</i></p> <p><i>Features about price to promote:</i></p>

Place		
Do you bring your services to your populations or do they come to you?		<i>Additional information needed:</i> <i>Adjustments needed:</i> <i>Features about accessibility to promote:</i>
What physical and emotional barriers reduce access to your services?		
Overall, are your services as accessible as they could be to your populations?		
Production		
Can you effectively meet the current demand? (Consider if current physical space, staff, and inventory allow your organization to function smoothly enough to deliver services to all your clients.)		<i>Additional information needed:</i> <i>Adjustments needed:</i> <i>Features about capacity to promote:</i>
How much demand could you handle with these current resources?		
Can you effectively meet the demand projected in your marketing goals?		
Promotion		
What promotional techniques do you use? (Note below what messages they carry to your populations and whether they are effective.)		<i>Additional information needed:</i> <i>Adjustments needed:</i>
Technique	Message	
		<i>Promotion ideas:</i>
	Effective or Not?	
Do you use techniques that effectively motivate your populations to use your services?		

Adapted from Stern, 1990, pp. 54–60.

Conducting market research. If you are considering small changes, and your audit indicates that you need more information on your target population's knowledge and perceptions of your organization, you may be able to get this information from exit interviews with clients or from community-based interviews with non-clients that staff or volunteers living the same communities could conduct. However, if you are considering costly changes, you will need very accurate information and should probably invest in market research conducted by a public relations agency or market research firm. Market research provides quantitative or detailed qualitative data that can help you segment your target populations (understand the characteristics of subpopulations) so that you can use your resources to

develop quality improvements that these subpopulations will appreciate. It uses surveys, in-depth interviews, or focus groups to find answers from different subpopulations to such questions as:

- Have you heard of and/or used the program/service?
- What does the program/service do and whom does it serve?
- What do you know about its location, hours, etc.?
- What do you think of the accessibility and quality of its staff, services, and facilities?
- What do you think about the cost of its services and products?

- Have you recommended or would you recommend it to others? To whom? Why or why not?
- What suggestions would you make for improving this program/service?
- What similar programs/services have you used?
- What is your opinion of those programs/services?

When thoroughly analyzed, the results you get from market research or a marketing audit will help you to identify problem areas in your marketing elements and your target populations' perceptions of you. Performing these investigations will also provide opportunities to build positive relationships with clients and potential clients by showing that you care about their views.

Developing Strategies to Strengthen Your Marketing Mix

You can use your marketing information and positive relationships with clients to develop strategies that will strengthen your marketing mix. These strategies will help the organization to:

- achieve high-quality, personalized services **(product)** with specific benefits for your target **populations**;
- charge a reasonable **price**, not too high or low;
- make your services accessible **(place)**;
- meet demand effectively **(production)**;
- use appropriate techniques that motivate people to rely on your service **(promotion)**.

Activities Related to Marketing

Social marketing. The application of modern commercial marketing methods to promote practices that benefit both individuals and society at large. In the health sector, it involves such efforts as distributing needed health products, motivating clients to use them, and promoting healthful behavior in ways that improve supply and increase demand. Social marketing uses existing wholesale and retail networks to sell affordable name-brand products and to advertise these brands through culturally appropriate media. In this way, it reaches low-income population groups not being reached by existing health delivery systems and commercial enterprises. Examples of products distributed through social marketing are condoms and other contraceptives, oral rehydration salts, treated mosquito nets, iodized salt, maternal multi-vitamins, and vitamin-enriched staple foods.

Information, education and communication (IEC). Communications that provide education and information about health risks, problems, and available services to help people make informed choices about their health practices. IEC includes the use of mass media, individual and group counseling, and traditional communication methods to change health knowledge, attitudes, practices, and behavior.

Achieving High-Quality, Personalized Services

Your purpose in developing strategies for achieving high-quality services is to enable clients to easily recognize the quality of your services and keep coming back. These strategies should involve all your staff in meeting the perceived individual and group needs of your target populations. The attitude of your staff toward existing and potential clients can have a major impact on the target populations' perceptions of your services. Staff need a good understanding of all your organization's services, so they can make appropriate referrals for other services. Client-focused training and procedures will boost the public's image of your organization as a place where "clients are people, not numbers," and "everyone seems to care." To build quality services, concentrate on efforts that:

- reinforce positive attitudes of all staff toward clients;
- orient staff to all the organization's services;
- teach staff to identify additional client needs and make referrals;
- provide opportunities to tailor services to different client groups;
- introduce staff to procedures for personalizing client visits.

Reinforcing positive staff attitudes toward clients. Your role as manager is to model positive attitudes about clients and transmit these attitudes enthusiastically. Organize discussion sessions about clients' needs to allow staff the time to raise and dispel concerns they may have about their clients, so they can understand their clients better, and to reinforce positive service attitudes. Staff attitudes that support quality services include:

- "Serving these clients is a privilege that brings us great satisfaction." Staff who have this attitude are more apt to arrive on time, serve their clients efficiently yet thoroughly, and provide them with explanations for their services.
- "Our responsibility is to attend to the particular, felt needs of individual clients. Our clients know what they want and need." Staff who share this attitude show patience, consideration, and

empathy in helping their clients find ways to express their needs. At all times, they treat their clients as equals with different roles in a mutually satisfying relationship.

- "We go out of our way to ensure client satisfaction." Enthusiastic staff always work to find the best ways to meet their clients' needs.

Orienting staff to all your organization's services. Staff who come in direct contact with clients often have very specific duties and limited awareness of the array of services your organization has to offer. In order to make these front-line staff successful promoters of your organization's services, update them periodically through orientation sessions and supervisory visits about services throughout the organization, where and when these services can be accessed, whom they are designed for, how much they cost, and why they are attractive to specific groups of clients.

Teaching staff to identify additional client needs and make referrals. To teach staff to identify clients' needs beyond the stated reason for their visit, ask staff to share successful experiences in which they detected additional needs and directed clients to other services. Also have front-line staff practice, through role plays, how to detect needs of their clients that present opportunities to tell about other organizational services. Ask them to rehearse descriptions of services in words that directly address the particular needs, preferences, and concerns of individual clients and to practice making referrals. In this way, staff will improve their abilities to provide personalized attention to the additional needs of your clients.

Providing opportunities to tailor services to different client groups. Organize regular staff discussions to review information gained from conversations with clients and research about what the target population for each service perceives as benefits and quality features. Encourage staff to suggest service improvements that reflect client perceptions. Staff may recognize that mothers like having a play area for the children who accompany them and so consider making a children's corner in the waiting room with a small table, chairs, and toys. They may find that rural clients coming for their initial visit may need more counseling and education, and so schedule extra time to answer their questions.

Personalize Client Visits

Personalizing client visits builds trust and confidence in your service providers. This can be a powerful tool in ensuring positive word-of-mouth recommendations. To personalize client visits:

- Develop and introduce procedures to staff for personalizing client visits.
- On small cue cards, print procedures that remind staff to:
 - wear a name tag and introduce themselves to each client;
 - ask for and use the client's name;
 - orient the client to his or her visit;
 - get to know the client, and his or her individual needs, concerns, and fears;
 - accommodate these concerns with personalized services.
- If possible, arrange for clients to see the same provider each time they return, if they would like to.
- Have staff practice telling clients whom they will see, about how long it will take, what results they can expect, and how much it will cost. Such an orientation reduces client surprises and disappointment with services.
- Suggest language the staff can use in conveying messages to clients about the ongoing effort to provide high-quality care and to respect clients' rights. Such messages let clients know that staff care about clients and help to create a positive image of services.
- Establish and enforce clear procedures for taking vital signs and conducting counseling sessions.
- Schedule enough time for practitioners to ask if the client has any questions or concerns about the visit and if everything is going well. *For example, a client may be fearful of a pelvic exam, be worried about the possible results of a pregnancy test, not have enough money, or need to leave in 45 minutes.*
- Encourage staff to respond to the expressed concerns of each client by making a concerted effort to accommodate services to individual needs.

Charging a Reasonable Price

Small differences in prices or pricing policies can greatly affect the extent to which your populations use your services. Your market research or marketing audit will help you understand what your clients can and are willing to pay. If there is a discrepancy between your market information and your prices, then you can decide what kinds of changes to make by considering:

- the way prices were originally set;
- clients' perceptions of how reasonable your prices are;
- staff perceptions of prices;
- regular monitoring of your unit costs, pricing policies and procedures, and competitors' prices.

Price setting. The usual method to set a fair price for a service requires finding out:

- how much the service actually costs you to deliver it;

- whether clients have the ability to pay the full cost or even more;
- how much other organizations in your area charge for similar services.

After considering how your prices were set, look at your clients' perceptions of your prices.

Clients' perceptions of prices. Even if your prices are comparable to similar services at other clinics, clients will consider your prices in the context of their available income, the value of your services to them, and the other costs associated with a visit. Clients pay even for free visits in the time they take away from their other duties, in lost wages, and in transportation costs. They need to feel that the service they receive is of sufficiently high quality to be worth these costs and any prices you charge.

Clients may perceive your prices as unreasonable when they do not understand all the charges. For example, charges that were hidden from clients at the outset of the visit and are added on at the end can anger clients or embarrass them if they do not have enough money to pay. Clients may also think your prices are unreasonable if they are rigidly set so that clients cannot make choices about the services they will pay for or if all clients must pay the same amount.

To help clients understand that your prices are reasonable, you should:

- make sure your prices are set fairly according to easy-to-understand criteria;
- include in your stated prices everything for which the customer will have to pay;
- provide options for variably priced visits *for example, in a family planning visit, let the client choose what quantity of a short-term method she can pay for at her visit, or whether to have specific laboratory tests all at once or spaced out over later visits;*
- find out if a fee scale that varies by the clients' ability to pay would be acceptable to your clients;
- establish procedures so that each staff member can explain your prices in clear, simple language before services are provided;
- consider posting prices per service in the waiting room and including them on flyers.

Staff perceptions of your prices. If you offer low-cost service options, remind staff that even clients who pay less in cash are still paying in time, lost pay, or transportation costs. When staff genuinely appreciate the sacrifices that clients make, they grow committed to helping each client find the most appropriate price and service option for the particular visit.

Monitoring of costs, and pricing policies and procedures. You should regularly monitor your unit costs and your competitors' prices for similar services. Periodically ask your target populations questions to

determine how successfully your policies have achieved reasonable prices and how they perceive other providers' prices. Your ongoing sensitivity to concerns about prices sends the marketing message that your program values its clients.

Making Your Services Accessible

Accessibility is determined by physical location of services, hours that services are offered, and numerous emotional factors. As a manager, you may have limited control over the location of your services. You can alter or extend service hours to fit the schedules of your clients. You can also influence how accessible your services are by making sure that:

- buildings and services are clearly identified;
- clients feel safe around the facility;
- the building and grounds are clean and attractive;
- staff members speak the language of clients and are aware of their customs.

Meeting Demand

As a result of your marketing efforts, you will need to be prepared if demand increases as planned or exceeds your expectations. Review your capacity to provide services (i.e., your space, staff, volunteers, equipment including vehicles, and supplies). Consider whether any are underused and could be better devoted to another purpose. *For example, if you are doing few surgical contraceptive operations, but your demand for laboratory services is growing, you may want to convert one of your operating rooms into laboratory space.* Consider whether and when you will need to change operating procedures to accommodate more clients. Being prepared will reduce clients' disappointments, such as the common occurrence of finding drugs unavailable after a long wait. If demand does not increase to the level you expect, you will need to look back at your audit or research and probe for more reasons why demand is slow to respond.

Promoting Your Services

Once you have developed high-quality, personalized, accessible, and affordable services that clients are willing to recommend to others, you need to promote or publicize these services. Unsolicited word-of-mouth recommendations will effectively reach part of your target populations, but you will need additional promotional techniques to reach those who have not heard about your services. You should design your promotional efforts to offer images and messages about your services that respond to the identified needs and preferences of your target populations. Images, or combinations of words, pictures, shapes, colors, and sounds, provide the first impression of your organization. If people like the image you project, you can attract them to your organization. If your promotional campaign is to succeed in creating loyal clients, the services they receive during their visit should be customer-friendly and meet their needs and expectations.

One of the most creative and dynamic steps in marketing is identifying promotional techniques and suitable messages, that, within the constraints of your resources, will best communicate key ideas to your target populations to motivate their use of your services. Tailor your techniques and messages for target audiences carefully so that they will help you meet your marketing goals. Depending on the needs of your populations, consider low-cost techniques that promote:

- basic information about your services;
- the image of your services.

Using Low-Cost Information Techniques

To increase knowledge about your services among existing and potential clients or sources of clients, use the following techniques:

Informational cards. An inexpensive card that lists the services and products you offer is a very cost-effective way to provide your clients with information when they come for a visit. Staff members can give the cards to clients toward the end of their visit and point out specific services on the card that would meet their other needs. Clients can also pass the cards on to family members and friends.

Public flyers. Develop simply written, one-page flyers with specific information that your target populations need in order to use your services. Let them know what services you offer, the address of your clinics, their hours of operation, whether you charge for services and, if so, your prices. To reach large numbers of people with this information, distribute flyers in places where your populations spend time, such as the marketplace, schools, companies, farms, fairs, social clubs, and local businesses. Community health workers can distribute them and speak to semi-literate potential clients at the same time.

Contact with referral sources. Identify providers and businesses that provide related services to your populations, such as private physicians and nurses, public and nonprofit health services, traditional healers, agricultural agents, schools and teachers, clergy, laboratories, pharmacies, trade unions, and professional organizations. Find out what they know and don't know about your services and develop materials to address gaps in their information. Maintain regular contact with them to ensure that their information is current, listen to what they have to say about your services, and encourage them to make referrals when appropriate. Above all, let them know the results of their referrals.

Promoting Your Organization's Image Inexpensively

Promote your organization's image as a provider of high-quality services when you need to improve community perceptions of your services or introduce an improved program. Expect that changing community perceptions will take time and persistence to achieve.

Communicating a new program to clients. Let clients know whenever you have changed your hours, location, use of space, or pricing policies, or have introduced personalized, improved care in order to address past problems and clients' suggestions. This will communicate your sensitivity to your clients' needs and preferences and your continuous dedication to improving your services for them. Offer clients written promotional materials, and suggest that they spread the word. Speaking directly to clients will give them specific language and points that they can use in making personal

recommendations to others. Requesting recommendations is often forgotten and can be difficult for staff to do, but organizations that have requested clients to be an active part of their promotional activities have often found that this gives clients a sense of being an important part of the organization's mission. By pointing out quality improvements to clients, you help them to recognize their wise choice of providers, feel proud that they took control of getting their needs met, and be confident that they can recommend your services to others.

Bringing clients to the clinic. For infrequent clients, potential clients, or referral sources, try techniques that expose them to your facility and show

them the specific ways in which your services have improved. Use such techniques as:

- introductory offers for free or reduced-cost visits (for clients);
- temporary free services or inexpensive gifts (for clients);
- tours of your facility and staff introductions (for clients and referral sources);
- open houses that familiarize visitors with the quality of your services (for clients and referral sources).

The box that follows presents other low-cost techniques for sending your messages out.

Sample Low-Cost Promotional Techniques	
Brochures	Use headlines and pictures to communicate your main points. Indicate special benefits for your clients.
Networking	Ask volunteers, board members, friends, and loyal clients to contact opinion leaders and request them to spread your messages.
News Releases	Announce new hours and services, health workshops, special events, awards, and new staff. Find out newspaper deadlines and the names of editors to whom you should send releases.
Posters	Provide strong, appealing images with enlarged photographs, designs, or drawings, and key phrases that promote benefits and invite use.
Public Speaking	Build public speaking capabilities of staff and arrange to have them speak at meetings of schools, churches, cooperatives, unions, and community groups. Get on existing radio and TV shows.
Radio Public Service Announcements	Find out the lead time it takes to get a public service announcement on the air. Write a catchy announcement, taking 10–30 seconds of air time, for an upcoming event.

Adapted from Stern, 1990, pp. 97–100.

Putting Together Your Marketing Plan

Once you have clarified your goals, completed your marketing audit, and developed your strategies, you are ready to put together a marketing plan and budget. Your plan should lay out the activities you need to carry out to achieve your goals by lining up your six marketing elements: product, populations, price, place, production, and promotion. It allows you to assign costs to these activities for such items as staff time, supplies, and promotional materials. The marketing team should ask

anyone who will be involved in implementing the plan for suggestions. Periodically evaluate the results of the plan, keep everyone in the organization informed about progress, and revise the plan as new opportunities and ideas emerge.

The following box presents a sample format you and your marketing team can use to organize your marketing plan. The plan encompasses your marketing goals, the marketing mix you are planning, the activities through which you will achieve this mix, and key promotional details. Add as many rows as you need for the services and activities you want to include in your plan.

Sample Marketing Plan Format

Marketing Goals

State your marketing goals:

Marketing Mix

For each product, indicate your planned marketing mix.

Product	Target Populations to Whom Product Will Be Marketed	Planned Price for Product	Place to Deliver Product and Features Promoting Accessibility	Changes in Production Needed to Meet Demand	Features and Benefits to Promote
Service A					
Service B					
Service C					

List all the activities the organization needs to take to achieve the marketing mix planned for each service listed above. Indicate the person responsible for the activity, the time during which he or she should complete the activity, and the amount you will budget for this activity.

Activities	Person Responsible	Time to Begin and End Activity	Budget
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
Activity 3			

Promotion

Restate the activities, listed above, that deal with promotion and indicate the promotional technique you will use, the message you will promote, and the action you would like the populations to take in response to the message.

Promotional Activity	Promotional Technique	Message	Action That Populations Are to Take
Activity 1			
Activity 2			
Activity 3			

Strengthening Marketing Mix to Achieve a Social Mission

For the past twenty-five years, the Mexican Federation of Private Associations for Health and Community Development (FEMAP) has maintained its mission to serve Mexico's poorest citizens through affordable, cost-effective, high-quality health and community development services. Over 40 affiliates offer maternal and child health, family planning, reproductive health, and community development services, through the efforts of more than 8,000 voluntary promoters. Forty-seven outpatient clinics and seven small hospitals provide backup support for their health services.

Starting in 1992, FEMAP underwent an extensive five-year transition, with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development, to increase the amount of operating costs it could recover using locally generated income. By strengthening its marketing mix of product, population, price, place, production, and promotion, FEMAP has been able to increase its recovery rate from 30% to 80% over a four-year period without losing sight of its social mission. In particular, FEMAP continually works to:

- achieve high-quality, low-cost services;
- adjust services to attract new demand;
- build up its private-sector promotional network.

Achieving high-quality, low-cost services. FEMAP's primary goal for its services is to provide a low-cost, high-quality basic service package. This goal accounts for much of the organization's success. Bolstered by a market study in which its low-income clients indicated that quality was more important to them than price, FEMAP began to systematically assess its clients' perceptions of quality and their continual use of its services using rapid exit interviews with clients, suggestion boxes, community surveys, analyses of service statistics, and periodic internal evaluations. It continually feeds results from this marketing analysis back to staff through workshops designed to encourage a customer-service approach. In addition to standards for quality of medical care, FEMAP has established standards to promote positive client-provider communication and client satisfaction with services.

FEMAP has also kept the prices of its services affordable in the eyes of its clients. Its client, community, and provider surveys defined affordability by assessing clients' willingness and ability to pay certain prices, the average income of the communities it serves, and the prices charged by other reproductive health service providers. To keep from routinely passing onto its clients increases in costs of providing services, FEMAP has emphasized revenue-generating services that allow it to maintain or reduce prices of important services that are not profitable. It has also increased the efficiency of services that cost more to provide than they can generate in income. As a result of their high quality and low prices, many of FEMAP's services have attracted more and more clients.

Adjusting services to attract new target populations. FEMAP recognized an emerging market opportunity when large numbers of poor people migrated to factory jobs along Mexico's border with the United States, straining the public health system of this region of the country. In order to reach this population, FEMAP conducted a market analysis that included discussions with factory workers and managers. It learned that:

- factory workers had difficulty accessing health and reproductive health services;
- factory managers frequently faced extra costs for downtime and retraining because every month 11% of their workers left their jobs to take other jobs;
- factory managers needed to quickly develop procedures for complying with new national environmental protection laws.

As a result of its market analysis, FEMAP adjusted existing services and developed new services to meet factory workers' and managers' needs. For example, FEMAP introduced on-site factory health services and fee-generating workshops on reproductive health and worker productivity for employees, factory medical personnel, and social workers. Then, it promoted these new services as ways that factory managers could attract loyal workers. This successful approach reduced monthly worker turnover to 1%. FEMAP also worked with factory managers to develop new processes to remove and recycle their manufacturing waste materials. Offering these health and environmental services has greatly helped the sustainability of individual FEMAP affiliates. For example, one affiliate in Ciudad Juárez is able to subsidize 43% of the annual cost of its community reproductive health program by providing these services to 104 small factories through contracts and fees for services. In the future, FEMAP affiliates hope to develop and promote to factory managers several employee benefits packages of basic health and community development services.

Building up a private-sector promotional network. FEMAP calls on a Board of Patrons, composed of business men and women, as its main promotional technique for developing a private-sector support network. The board makes new contacts in the private sector, raises funds, taps into private-sector capital, technology, and expertise, and promotes FEMAP's social mission for the poor. The patrons use their contacts to establish FEMAP affiliates and local boards in other cities. The funds they raise through donations from community leaders cover over 17% of the federation's total annual operating costs. They have networked with communities and businesses in the United States to form a foundation that would support special projects in Mexico such as a family hospital, programs for female drug addicts and prostitutes, and improvements in neighborhood parks. Most of all, they promote to Mexico's elite leaders FEMAP's mission of service to the poor. By encouraging these business and community leaders to invest in the health and economy of poor communities, FEMAP patrons provide a way for these leaders to satisfy their social conscience by supporting equitable opportunities that raise the standard of living for low-income Mexicans.

By continually striving to provide high-quality, low-cost services, adjusting its services to attract new demand, and building up its private-sector network, FEMAP uses marketing to achieve its social mission in sustainable ways.

Recognizing the Manager's Role in Marketing

Throughout the marketing process, from clarifying a market niche to establishing marketing goals, deciding where to focus marketing efforts, and putting together and implementing a marketing plan, your role as manager is to support your team as it develops a marketing approach for your organization. You should incorporate the marketing plan's activities into the annual work plan and budget. You should also help implement

whatever strategies the team develops for recruiting client-oriented staff, developing job descriptions, conducting performance reviews, and establishing visit procedures that support high-quality, personalized services.

You need to act as a role model for your staff by talking with your clients. Walk around your organization to observe the strategies you are implementing, such as offering personalized service, providing information on available services, and making referrals within the

organization. Listen to clients' responses to your efforts and continually pay attention to their needs and ways you can tailor services to meet these needs. To support a continuous dialogue with clients, implement a system of client feedback and another system to collect and respond to client complaints.

Finally, set aside time to network outside your organization to maintain and increase the visibility of your organization among community leaders. Promote your organization among health, business, and social leaders and funding sources. Keep aware of marketplace

changes in your community and among service providers by talking to knowledgeable sources and keeping up with the news. Discuss potential market opportunities and challenges with your board to see if you should deal with them. By using marketing strategies to respond to specific individual client needs and the general needs of your target populations, you and your staff will build a mutually satisfying relationship with your clients, funding sources, and community that will strengthen the long-term sustainability of your organization.

Reviewers' Corner

*A forum for discussing additional applications
of the concepts and techniques presented in this issue*

On the benefits of marketing . . . *One reviewer comments, "You do not need to be facing competition in order to turn to marketing. We use marketing to understand and respond to the needs and demands of our target population, to broaden our market, to expand our service mix, and to live up to our organizational mission."*

On adjusting pricing policies . . . *One reviewer notes, "Our non-governmental organization (NGO) serves a rural population with a hospital and 30 health clinics. As the number of nearby NGOs and private-for-profit providers grew, our NGO experienced a significant decline in the number of patients coming for outpatient curative care. We wondered if the competition was drawing away our clients, so we conducted an audit of our marketing elements and discovered from our clinic staff that clients felt the our prices for drugs were too high compared to those of other providers. When we studied our competitors' pricing policies, we realized they charged one fee for a curative consultation and another for drugs, while we charged one fee that included both a consultation and drugs. After determining that a similar pricing policy would not decrease the revenue generated by a curative care visit, we developed a price list for drugs and a separate fee for consultations. Once our clients saw our new prices as in line with the competition, our client volume rose again."*

On adapting service mix to existing patterns of use . . . *Another reviewer relates, "We contracted locally for market research that would support self-financing in our network of 28 urban clinics. Exploring actual use of health services in six cities among middle- and lower- middle-class urban populations with disposable income for health services, we found that family planning and peri-natal visits, two of our most important services, had been least used by fee-paying clients over the previous two-year period, while family health doctor visits, laboratory services, and dental services were most used. Based on these findings, we spent three years systematically expanding family medicine and laboratory services and reducing space and staff time allotted to underused services. We also directly marketed our family planning services to clients during clinic visits for other services. Providing a fuller range of services improved the continuity of care we provided and enabled our urban clinics to achieve over 100% self-financing."*

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Populations

"Bringing Services to Hard to Reach Populations," Volume VI, Number 4, 1997.

Price

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CORE: A Tool for Cost and Revenue Analysis. Spreadsheets and User's Guide for determining the cost of providing services and planning for sustainability.

Place

"Making Your Clinic Building Work," Volume VI, Number 3, 1997.

"Bringing Services to Hard to Reach Populations," Volume VI, Number 4, 1997.

Production

"Improving Contraceptive Supply Management," Volume I, Number 4, 1992.

These MSH publications can also be found in MSH's electronic resource center (ERC) at <http://erc.msh.org>.

Resources related to promotion:

Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs, Media/Materials Clearinghouse, Baltimore, Maryland. [Http://jhuccp.org/mmc/service.stm](http://jhuccp.org/mmc/service.stm). Includes reproductive health promotional materials such as posters, videotapes, logos, and novelty items.

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Checklist for Marketing Your Organization's Services

- ☐ Learn about marketing principles and consider the strategic benefits that marketing offers your organization.
- ☐ Lay the groundwork for marketing in your organization by developing a marketing team, clarifying a market niche, developing a positioning statement, and establishing marketing goals.
- ☐ Focus your marketing efforts through a marketing audit that assesses the six elements of your marketing mix—product, populations, price, place, production, and promotion—or through market research that looks at your target population's perceptions of your marketing mix, or through a combination of both.
- ☐ Develop strategies to achieve high-quality, personalized, accessible services for your target populations that are effectively produced and offered at reasonable prices.
- ☐ Promote your services with low-cost techniques that convey information and image.
- ☐ Put together a marketing plan that lays out the activities you need to perform to coordinate the six elements of your marketing mix.
- ☐ Integrate the marketing plan into your regular work plan.
- ☐ Support the implementation of this plan by setting up systems and procedures to tailor services to clients' individual needs, and to maintain a continuous dialogue with clients.
- ☐ Maintain an external presence in the community to promote your organization among community leaders and to keep informed about new developments in the community that could indicate market opportunities or challenges.

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The Manager

CASE SCENARIOS FOR TRAINING AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Bourguiba Clinic Develops a Marketing Plan

“Thank you for coming,” said Harouna Cheikh Ahmed, head nurse of Bourguiba Clinic and coordinator of the clinic’s marketing team, which includes El Hadrani Salek, Director of Family Planning Services; Jamila Daddah, Director of Maternal and Child Care Services; and Cherif Sidi Mohammed, Chief Financial Officer. “Please welcome our new marketing team member, Nura Ahmed, who is our Board representative. To start our team meeting today, I will summarize our marketing efforts over the past two years.

“With the goal of sustainability in mind, we began two years ago to reexamine our service mix and think about offering new services that could increase the volume of our services, increase our revenues, and help us recover more of our costs. We analyzed our market niche and determined that in our area:

- We were the most respected provider of family planning services, which we provided at prices that people can afford;
- Due to reductions in funding, the public-sector clinics were finding it difficult to provide the same quality of maternal and child health services they were providing before;
- The private clinics were too expensive for people who use our services.

“As a result of these findings, we began offering MCH services, but we have not had the demand for them that we anticipated. We developed two marketing goals: to increase demand for MCH services, and to

change our image from that of a family planning service provider to a provider of MCH and family planning services. We also carried out a marketing audit. Cherif Sidi Mohammed will present the findings.”

Cherif stood up and cleared his throat. “In doing the marketing audit, we looked at six elements of our marketing mix: our product, our target populations, our prices, the location of our services, our capacity to meet demand, and our promotional activities,” he said. “I’ll run quickly through the major findings. In terms of product, many people in our community are not aware that we have added MCH services. They still think of us as only a provider of family planning services. As for population, the most important clients for our MCH services are children under five years old and women of child-bearing age. Our prices are in line with what our clients can pay.

“Our findings for place show that our current clients have no problems accessing our services. However, our MCH clients don’t like waiting in line with our family planning clients, and they feel uncomfortable in our waiting room because they don’t want the children who accompany them to hear the family planning education talks.

“Our findings for production tell us that our current MCH staff could effectively handle an increased volume of MCH services. And finally, our limited promotion efforts, such as providing flyers in the waiting room and adding MCH services to the list of services on our sign outside, have not been effective in changing our image.”

Case Scenario: Bourguiba Clinic Develops a Marketing Plan

“Thank you very much, Cherif,” said Harouna. “The marketing audit has provided us with useful information for developing a marketing plan. Does anyone have any comments?”

“I think that we should focus on developing strategies related to place and promotion, as these seem to be our problem areas,” said Jamila Daddah. “Mothers who come with children don’t feel comfortable in line or in the waiting room, and many community members don’t know about our new services. I think we should create a separate reception and waiting area for mothers with children and develop a promotion plan that changes our image.”

“Let’s think about these two findings one at a time,” said Harouna. “First, let’s consider place. How should we go about making our MCH clients feel more comfortable about coming here for services?”

“I volunteer to talk with the staff who provide services for mothers and children and ask what they think would be needed to create a more welcoming environment,” said Jamila.

“As for developing a promotion plan,” said Cherif, “we need to try some new things, such as identifying additional client needs and making referrals. We should

make sure that everyone on our family planning staff, for example, knows how to recognize when client needs present an opportunity to tell them about our MCH services. I volunteer to investigate ways to provide training in this area to our staff, and the costs involved in providing this training.”

El Hadrani added, “Perhaps we could offer a coupon to our family planning clients for a free MCH care visit. That might bring us some new clients. I volunteer to investigate the feasibility of this and the possible expenses involved.”

“Has anyone approached our community and religious leaders to let them know about our MCH services?” asked Nura Ahmed. “I volunteer to do this, but I would like to learn more about our services and what to say about them, first.”

“These are all good ideas. And thank you for offering to lead these efforts,” said Harouna. “Nura, can you meet with me now, so we can talk about the MCH services? And for the others who have volunteered, I would like you to give us an update at our next meeting on what you have found. We will use this information to develop a marketing plan.”

Case Discussion Questions: Bourguiba Clinic Develops a Marketing Plan

1. What was the Bourguiba Clinic’s goal in deciding to offer maternal and child health care services, and what has happened so far? Discuss the marketing activities the organization has already undertaken.
2. What did the marketing team discover about the six elements of the clinic’s marketing mix as a result of doing a marketing audit?
3. What activities have team members volunteered to do in order to begin to develop strategies for a marketing plan, and what marketing elements do these activities relate to? What other marketing activities do you suggest that they consider?

Case Analysis: Bourguiba Clinic Develops a Marketing Plan

1. What was the Bourguiba Clinic's goal in deciding to offer maternal and child health care services, and what has happened so far? Discuss the marketing activities the organization has already undertaken.

The Bourguiba Clinic's goal in adding maternal and child health care services was sustainability. The clinic hoped that providing the new services would increase service volume, increase revenues, and help the clinic recover more of its costs. However, the demand for their new services has not been as high as they had hoped.

Prior to adding MCH services, the marketing activities that the organization undertook were to:

- Form a marketing team;
- Look at their market niche.

After finding that demand for their MCH services was not as high as they had hoped, the marketing activities that the marketing team performed were to:

- Develop marketing goals;
- Carry out a marketing audit.

These four activities are discussed below.

- **Marketing team.** The organization formed a marketing team with five members: the head nurse, the director of family planning services, the director of MCH services, the chief financial officer, and a board member. The marketing team is in charge of the clinic's marketing efforts.
- **Market niche.** In looking at their market niche, the team discovered three things: the Bourguiba Clinic was the most respected provider of family planning services in their area at prices that people could afford; the public-sector clinics in their area were finding it challenging to provide the same quality of MCH services that they were before, due to reductions in funding; and the private clinics in their area were too expensive for people who use the Bourguiba Clinic's services.
- **Marketing goals.** The marketing goals that the team has developed are to increase the demand for the clinic's MCH services, and change the clinic's image in the community from that of a family planning service provider to that of a provider of MCH and family planning services.
- **Marketing audit.** The team looked at the six marketing elements. The findings related to place and promotion are particularly relevant for developing marketing strategies.

2. What did the marketing team discover about the six elements of the clinic's marketing mix as a result of doing a marketing audit?

The marketing mix elements that the team has taken into account in doing a marketing audit and developing a marketing plan are: product, populations, price, place, production, and promotion.

The findings of the marketing audit for each of these six elements are:

- **Product.** The community does not know that the clinic has added maternal and child health care services.
- **Populations.** The most important clients for the clinic's new services are children under five years old and women of child-bearing age.

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- **Price.** The clinic's prices are in line with what people can pay.
- **Place.** The clinic's current clients have no problems accessing their services. However, MCH clients don't feel comfortable waiting in line with the family planning clients, and they don't like to have their children hear the family planning education talks while they wait in the waiting room.
- **Production.** The current MCH staff could handle an increase in service volume.
- **Promotion.** The clinic's limited promotion efforts have not been effective at changing the clinic's image from that of a family planning services provider to a provider of MCH and family planning services. Promotion efforts so far have been limited to providing flyers in the waiting room and adding MCH services to the list of services on the sign outside the clinic.

3. What activities have team members volunteered to do in order to begin to develop strategies for a marketing plan, and what marketing elements do these activities relate to? What other marketing activities do you suggest that they consider?

The activities that the team members have offered to do so far are:

- One team member has volunteered to speak with the staff who provide services for mothers and children, and ask them what they think would be needed to create a more welcoming environment for these clients. This activity relates to the marketing element "place."
- The activities that team members have volunteered to do related to the marketing element "promotion" are to:
 - Investigate ways to provide staff with training in identifying additional client needs and making referrals to the clinic's MCH services, and the costs involved in providing this training;
 - Investigate the feasibility of offering a coupon to family planning clients for a free maternal and child health care visit and the possible costs involved;
 - Approach community and religious leaders to let them know about the new services.

Other marketing activities that might be useful to consider are:

- Holding a health fair;
- Holding an open house;
- Scheduling times to give people tours of the clinic's service area, especially the MCH area;
- Having staff provide clients who are being referred to MCH services with informational cards that have the MCH service hours and prices on them;
- Having MCH staff ask their clients to recommend the MCH services to their family and others, and provide these MCH clients with informational cards to hand out.